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Message Text

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14
ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EPA-04 CEQ-02 SCI-06 AID-20 CIAE-00

COA-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NSF-04

NSC-10 NSAE-00 PM-07 RSC-01 SS-15 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01

RSR-01 /143 W
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R 040032 Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6783
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA
USCINCSO

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E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PBOR, PN
SUBJECT: PANAMA REQUESTS CONDEMNATION OF US AT MEXICO CITY SCIENCE MEETING

REF: MEXICO 4756

1. MR. GREENFIELD OF EPA HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING TEXT, AS PER REFTEL.

INFORMAL TRANSLATION

LICENCIADO GERARDO BUENO ZIRION

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
MEXICO.

I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF DIRECTING MYSELF TO YOU WITH THE REQUEST THAT YOU PLEASE TRANSMIT TO THE CONTINENTAL REUNION ON SCIENCE AND MAN, WHICH SHALL BE CELEBRATED IN MEXICO FROM JUNE 20 TO JULY 4, THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.
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IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SUBJECT OF ECOLOGY AND DETERIORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT WILL BE TAKEN UP DURING THIS CONGRESS, AND THAT WITHIN THE SAME, THE AMERICAN MALACOLOGICAL UNION WILL PRESENT A RESOLUTION CONCERNING MAINTENANCE OF THE FRESH WATER BARRIER ACTUALLY IN EXISTENCE IN THE PANAMA CANAL, THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA CANNOT PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY OF EXPRESSING ITS POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR OUR COUNTRY. MY GOVERNMENT HAS RECEIVED INFORMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PANAMA CANAL, WHICH IS CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, PROPOSES TO SUBMIT FOR STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF PUMPING SALT WATER INTO LAKE GATUN AS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF ITS LOW WATER LEVEL AND IN ORDER TO EXPEDITE PASSAGE OF SHIPS. SUCH A PROJECT, WHICH IS NOT NEW, WOULD CONSTITUTE A SERIOUS DANGER TO THE
ECOLOGICAL EQUILIBRIUM OF THE FRESH WATER ECOSYSTEM OF THE ARTIFICIAL
LAKE AT GATUN. IMMEDIATE IMPLICATIONS WOULD CONSIST IN THE ALTERATION OF THE BIOTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LACUSTRINE SHORES, WHICH WOULD BE CONVERTED INTO MANGROVE ZONES, TO THE CONSEQUENT EXTINCTION
OF THE TYPICAL FRESH WATER FAUNA ACTUALLY EXISTING IN THAT ECOSYSTEM. BUT SINCE THE ECOLOGICAL CHAIN UNFAILINGLY REACHES MAN, THE RESULT WOULD BE THAT APPROXIMATELY EIGHTY VILLAGES NOW UNDER LACUSTRINE INFLUENCE WOULD BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY SUCH A PROJECT.

SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS FROM THE POPULATION OF THESE VILLAGES AND THIS MEANS THAT THE SAME AMOUNT OF PANAMANIANS WOULD SEE THEIR TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF SUBSISTENCE IRREMEDIABLY UNDERMINED. WE KNOW
THAT OTHER ENGINEERING ALTERNATIVES EXIST, PERHAPS MORE COSTLY THAN THE PROJECTED PUMPING OF SALT WATER INTO GATUN LAKE, BUT WHICH DO NOT INCLUDE AN ASSAULT UPON THE ECOSYSTEM. I WISH TO POINT OUT THAT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA ESTABLISHES THE FOLLOWING IN ITS ARTICLE 110: IT IS THE FUNDAMENTAL DUTY OF THE STATE TO WATCH OVER THE CONSERVATION OF ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS, PREVENTING
CONTAMINATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND DISTURBANCE OF THE EQUILIBRIUM

OF THE ECOSYSTEMS, IN HARMONY WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION. MY GOVERNMENT MUST COMPLY WITH THAT CONSTITO-
-
TIONAL MANDATE AND, THEREFORE, IT SUPPORTS THE INITIATIVE CONTAINED IN THE RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY THE AMERICAN MALACOLOGICAL UNION, WHICH CONDEMNS THE PROJECT OF PUMPING SALT WATER INTO LAKE GATUN SINCE THIS WOULD BE AN ECOLOGICAL IRRESPONSIBILITY.
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FINALLY, SAID PROJECT DOES NOT CONSULT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA, WITHIN WHOSE TERRITORY THE PANAMA
CANAL FUNCTIONS.

I WISH TO EXPRESS THE ASSURANCES OF MY DISTINGUISHED CONSIDERATION.
JPUAN ANTONIO TACK
MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
END INFORMAL TRANSLATION.
MCBRIDE

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
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